

It is reading something into the passage to say that these words mean that this was the first time the name YHWH was revealed. Yet they clearly indicate that the writer believed it to have been known from a very early time. It is hard to think that a redactor would combine this with documents that explicitly declared something quite different.

There are various problems in the exact understanding of Exodus 3:14, but it is hardly reasonable to say that it asserts that the name YHWH was now being given to the Israelites for the first time. The context makes it clear that Moses is asking for a way to convince the people that he has been sent by the God of their fathers, and therefore asks what name to give. Revelation of an entirely new name would hardly fit the purpose. Thus the argument that the E document here contradicts the J document rests upon an extremely weak basis.

When it comes to the P document, the evidence at first sight seems much stronger. Exodus 6:3 reads: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name EL SHADDAI, but by my name YHWH was I not known to them.."

It should be noticed, however, that this does not say that God had hitherto been called ELOHIM, but is now revealing the name YHWH, but rather that he appeared to the patriarchs under the name EL SHADDAI. This particular designation, which occurs in Genesis only a few times, is translated "God Almighty" in the King James Version.

It is true, though, that at first sight the verse does seem to say that the name YHWH had previously been unknown. When any book is studied it is only reasonable to see whether sentences can be interpreted in such a way as to harmonize with one another. This is particularly true when we deal with a book written at another period and in another language. There is always the